

loss of life in London similar to that in Glasgow of which we have been speaking. On Sunday last St. John's Chapel, Bedford-row, was fired by means, it is said, of the iron smoke pipes from the furnaces, used to warm the building. The heat being intense, had ignited the board timbers, and the flames from them extended to the roof. A rush was made into the street by the congregation, but fortunately there were few people present, and no check-taker's barriers in the way, so that all escaped unhurt.

We were present at a meeting of the Institution of Civil Engineers on Tuesday evening last, when the general question of fire-proof constructions was discussed at some length. A paper by Mr. Braidwood was read, to which we shall refer hereafter, and an interesting discussion followed, wherein Professor Hosking, Mr. Farey, Mr. Cottam, Mr. Thomas Piper, Mr. Dines, and others, took part.

Apropos of warming, we must mention that poor Mr. Barry has again got into Dr. Reid's hot water. A petition from the doctor was presented to the House of Commons a few evenings since, complaining that obstructions were thrown in the way of carrying out his plans in the New Houses, and praying that a committee might be appointed to investigate the matter, and to call himself and the architect before it.

It is much to be regretted that Mr. Barry ever permitted any right of interference with his plans and arrangements to be given to another. He owes it to himself and the profession to make a stand and maintain his right position as architect. The architect is "the chief of the works," "first workman," and whatever is done should be subject to his approval and in accordance with his views. There cannot be two firsts in one series.

It is time that architects bestirred themselves; the prospect for them does not seem very brilliant. A new garrison chapel, which has been erected in Dublin; has led to some correspondence in the papers. The style is Norman, with transition to early English, and according to the designer's own statement, was taken from a church lately built in the west of England. The estimate was 3,000*l.*, and the cost about 2*l.* per sitting. The building was executed by contract, after public competition, by a builder who lost by the bargain. The accommodation afforded is for 1,560 adults and 224 children. A colonel in the Royal Engineers was the architect: and this is why we mention it.

If matters go on as they have begun, there will soon be little occupation for the professional architect. Clergymen are found to be the best qualified to design and erect churches and schools; soldiers to construct barracks, gateways, and castles; sailor officers, docks and bridges; actors, theatres; and Manchester mill-owners, warehouses and dwellings.

Othello's own occupation being gone, the only course remaining for him is to try another. There are some architects who would make uncommonly good manufacturers, and two or three who, if they would take to the stage, could play the "Jeremy Diddler" line of parts with considerable advantage to themselves, a result which they seem usually to keep in view. There are many others, however, who would supply what the stage has often wanted,—well-bred and accomplished gentlemen, and for the sake of these, and for the sake of the art, we see with pain and regret how architects are being shouldered on all sides. Going to California would, perhaps, be thought *infra dig* (pronounce it how you like, if in the

humour for a pun), but unless architects begin to look about them, they will soon have little chance of picking up gold or reputation anywhere else.

Some of our contemporaries, during the week, have been commenting on two of the craft, who, in former times, did manage to pick up the first part of these very desirable things somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park.

The appendix to a Parliamentary report on the management of the Woods and Forests, just now published, has supplied materials for an attack on the proceedings of this office in former times, of no ordinary force. It appears that parties possessing influence have received leases of land at ridiculously small rents, to the disadvantage, of course, of the national income. In some of the cases quoted it is not improbable that an explanation of the circumstances in connection with the "take," would put the matter in a different light; as, for example, in respect of Nash, the architect, to whom, it appears, that for fifty-three houses out of sixty in Augustus-street, Regent's-park, his representatives pay only 1*l.* per annum ground-rent; or in the case of James Burton, to whom the land on which is built Chester-terrace, Regent's-park, was leased in such a way that, for each of thirty-one of these houses, a ground-rent of 6*l.* per annum only is paid.

We all know that owners are quite willing to let to one speculator a large piece of land at the commencement of operations, and, when there is a certain amount of risk attaching, for a much smaller sum than could be realised by letting for single houses at a later day, when the matter is fairly afloat; and further, that the speculator is often permitted so to divide the sum paid by him (within certain limits), that some of the houses would have but a nominal ground-rent: indeed, it is by this arrangement that the speculators in building-land look for their profits, the sale of the improved ground-rents, subject to which the houses thus circumstanced can be disposed of, being certain.

We allude to these facts simply as showing that it is not unlikely that the discrepancy between the real value of the plots of land alluded to, and the rents agreed to be paid for them by these two "lucky architects" as they are termed, would be found less than it appears, if all the circumstances were known.

An explanation of this sort, however, could scarcely be looked for in the bulk of the cases quoted, as they mainly refer to members of the aristocracy, to whom plots of land have been let for their private purpose at singularly incommensurate rents. Thus, it is stated that George Fulke, Lord Lyttelton, had "a piece of ground, part of Greenwich Park," assigned to him in 1802, for 61 years, at 1*l.* per annum; nor does it appear that any fine or premium in respect of this grant was paid.

"The beauty of the Green-park," says the *Observer*, "is celebrated in history and song. On the one hand it has the park of St. James's and its ornithology, with the Palace of Buckingham and the gardens thereto attached; on the other it has Piccadilly, with the triumphal arch, the statue of Wellington; below is greensward, and around are the mansions of the great and the titled; in the centre was Rosamond's-pond, but it has been filled up, and at one side is the reservoir of some rich water company. Who knows not the Green-park? But those who think they know it best, know very little of the private history connected with certain portions of it. For

instance, is there one man in a million aware of the fact that the Most Noble the Marquis of Salisbury—the successor of him who shook his head so significantly—the great Lord Bury—holds a piece of ground in this park, for 99 years from April 5, 1796, at an annual rent—nominal rent would be a more accurate description—of 10*l.* 7*s.* 7*d.*, and that he has never paid a penny as fine for the same. Most lucky as well as "most noble" Marquis of Salisbury! But he is not the only Adam in this fiscal Eden before the fall. There is Lord Vernon, who has another "piece of ground" adjacent, at 8*l.* per annum; Lord Yarborough a third, at 7*l.* 9*s.* 5*d.* per annum; Sir John Hoste a fourth, at 4*l.* 14*s.* per annum; Viscount Gage a fifth, at 8*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* per annum; Lord Romney a sixth, at 5*l.* 4*s.* per annum; Lord Dundas a seventh, at 13*l.* per annum; the Earl of Cork an eighth, at 9*l.* 2*s.* per annum; and the Earl of Moira a ninth, at 7*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* per annum,—all without prejudice in the shape of fine."

"Contrast this," says the journal we have quoted, "with the condition of certain tradesmen in the Strand, who have also the fortune to hold leases under the Crown. The house No. 2, Lowther-arcade, which is combined with No. 11 in the Strand, pays 60*l.* a-year ground-rent to the Woods, Forests, and Land Revenue Board. No. 5, in the Arcade, which is a single house, consisting perhaps of four rooms, pays 24*l.* per annum. No. 8, which is in the same predicament, pays 35*l.*; while Nos. 9 to 11, all similarly circumstanced, pay each 50*l.* a-year to the Crown—nearly as much as the Earl of Ellesmere pays for Bridgewater House, and ten times more than is paid by the Lord Romney. Contrast it also with the sum paid by the Duke of Buccleuch for his house and grounds in Privy Gardens—stretching from Whitehall to the Thames, a miniature park before, a French pleasure garden behind—viz., 75*l.* 16*s.*; or with the sum paid by Lord Prudhoe, 72*l.*, for his mansion in the same place; or with the sums in fact paid as ground-rent by any nobleman to the Crown; and then ask yourself whether or not one law for the rich and another law for the poor has not been the practical rule in this country? The Marquis of Hertford pays for the grounds on which his villa stands, in the Regent's-park, occupying perhaps one-tenth of the superficial area of that place of public recreation, only 66*l.* per annum; while a tailor or a grocer, a hatter or a hosier, in Regent-street, pays from 60*l.* to 155*l.* a-year for the scanty plot upon which stands his frail tenement—pays it to the Crown in the same manner as the most noble the Marquis of Hertford. Instances *ad infinitum* might be multiplied, but these will suffice for the present."

We are disposed to think that explanation would put a different face on some of these transactions, which certainly, as they now stand, look glaringly unjust.

THE IRON TRADE.—We hope that our hint, some short time since, to purchasers, as to the then favourable state of the market, was appreciated, as there appears to be now some little probability that the tide may turn. Indeed, an advance of 20*s.* on the nominal quarterly price has been already declared, and although little dependence need be placed on such an announcement, there are other slight symptoms of a start. The increased demand, however, exclusively arises, no doubt, from the mere fact that the market has lately been in so favourable a state for purchasers; there being no additional outlet for the article, nor any great call for its production.